

The office action dated Oct. 9, 2007 required restriction between four allegedly different subcombinations. Each subcombination includes a chain of force applying units and coupling units. The coupling units of subcombination 1 include a pivot ball and first and second arms; the coupling units of subcombination 2 include lockable elbows, the coupling units of subcombination 3 include a single pivot ball a pivot ball and first and second arms; and the coupling units of subcombination 4 include pivoting means. Subcombination 4 also has rotational means and gripping means.

The scopes of subcombinations 1 and 3 clearly overlap. The office action appears to characterize subcombination 1 as having end supports but no force applying units, while subcombination 3 has force applying units but no end supports. The characterization is in accurate. Both subcombinations 1 and 3 have some sort of end support. The chain of force applying units and coupling units does not float freely in space. Moreover, both subcombinations have force applying units for clamping a top work piece (e.g., aircraft skin) to an underlying work piece (e.g., a frame). Therefore, restriction between subcombinations 1 and 3 is not proper according to MPEP 806.05(d). Nevertheless, the response filed Nov. 8, 2007 made an election of the claims associated with subcombination 1.

An RCE and response were filed on August 4, 2008. Claims 62-64 were added.

The office action dated Oct. 6, 2008 required yet another restriction, this time a seven-way restriction. New claims 62-64 were considered generic claims. Claims 2-3 were elected.

A non-final rejection was mailed on Jan. 30, 2009. Claims 2-3 and 62-64 were examined and rejected. In a response filed on April 30, 2009, claims 65 and 66 were new. New claim 65 is also a generic claim, as it recites the aircraft skin and aircraft frame in the claim body. New claim 66 is also a generic claim as it recites a chain of lockable coupling units and force applying units.

In conclusion, claims 2-3 correspond to the elected apparatus, species, and subcombination. Claims 62-66 are generic claims.

Examination of claims 2-3 and 62-66 is respectfully requested.

Claim 12 further limits the force applying units. Claims 18 and 20 recite additional features for a chain. They too should be examined.

Respectfully submitted,

/Hugh Gortler #33,890/  
Hugh P. Gortler  
Reg. No. 33,890  
(949) 454-0898

Date: April 2, 2010